THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Monday, the 22nd September 1947.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at eleven of the clock, Mr. Chairman (Dr. V. K. JOHN) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Distribution of controlled and rationed articles in the Presidency.

* 41 *Q.*—Sri R. SURYANARAYANA RAO: Will the Hon. the Minister for Food be pleased to state—

(*a*) the agency employed for the distribution of rationed and controlled articles in the Presidency and particularly in Malabar and the districts in the Circars;

(*b*) whether in areas where Producer cum Consumer Co-operative Societies have been organized, the distribution of rationed articles has been transferred to these societies;

(*c*) whether it is a fact that a large number of retail traders who have been in the trade have been thrown out of employment;

(*d*) whether the existing co-operatives which had been given ration shops will also be deprived of the work of equitable distribution;

(*e*) whether representations have been received pointing out the inequity which these new arrangements cause;

(*f*) whether representations have been specially received from Harijans and Muslims and whether ration shops have been allotted or reallotted to them; and

(*g*) whether the Government propose to review the whole system of distribution to make it more efficient?

The Hon. Dr. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" (*a*) Before the introduction of the scheme of producers cum consumers co-operative societies, distribution of rationed and controlled articles in the Presidency was generally through private agencies and co-operative societies. Since the introduction of the scheme in Malabar, the work of distribution of certain rationed articles such as rice, sugar and kerosene has been entrusted to the Producers cum Consumers Co-operative Societies, while other controlled articles still continue to be distributed through private channels. In the four Circars districts of East Godavari, West Godavari, Kistna and Guntur, the work of distribution of rationed and controlled articles was intended to be entrusted to the producers cum consumers co-operative societies.

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" (*b*) In Malabar the distribution of rationed articles has been partly entrusted to the producers cum consumers co-operative societies. In the Circars only a few societies were able to take over the distribution work from the previous agencies before orders staying such transfer were issued by the Government.

" (*c*) In Malabar, most of the retail traders were employed by the producers cum consumers co-operative societies. In the Circars, the question does not arise as only very few societies could take over ration shops and even in those cases previous retail traders were employed as far as possible under the instructions of the Government.

" (*d*) In view of the answer to clause (*c*) above, the question does not arise in the Circars. In Malabar, each case was examined on its merits and co-operative societies which had a democratic constitution and had a good business reputation were allowed to carry on the work of distribution of controlled articles.

" (*e*) There is no inequity in the orders of the Government regarding the new arrangements. Private merchants and a few co-operative societies whose business in rationed articles was taken over by the new societies have naturally complained about the loss involved to them. It is in order to meet such complaints that instructions were issued that the retail dealers and their employees who were ousted from business should be absorbed by the new societies as far as possible and that existing co-operative societies with good business reputation may be allowed to continue to do distribution work.

" (*f*) Representations have been received only from Harijans for the retention of retail shops now run by them. The Government have issued a general stay order in respect of the transfer of retail ration shops to the producers cum consumers co-operative societies in all the four Circar districts. In view of this, the question of allotment or reallotment of ration shops to the Harijans or Muslims does not arise at present.

" (*g*) The Government do not consider that the present system of distribution or agency for distribution is inefficient. Inefficient agents are eliminated and substituted by others. As regards the producers cum consumers co-operative societies in the Circars, the Government have set up a committee which will make recommendations about their future."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know from the Government whether all the co-operative societies in the district of Malabar were considered unfit to run ration shops and whether the shops were transferred to the producers cum consumers co-operative societies? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" There have been co-operative societies which had been doing good work and

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which had a democratic constitution. Only a few days ago, I answered in this House that distribution work had been restored to such societies, particularly in the taluk of Palghat."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" May I know whether the distribution work has been restored to the Palghat Co-operative Stores?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I have just now said that the distribution work has been restored to all societies which were doing good work and which had a democratic constitution."

SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO :—" My question was with particular reference to Palghat Co-operative Stores, which was doing good work before the producers cum consumers co-operative societies came into existence. May I know if the case of the Palghat Co-operative Stores has been considered?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" My impression is that it has been considered. But I will have to refer to the file to make myself sure of the position."

Groundnut oil produced in this Province.

* 42 *Q*.—SRI R. SURYANARAYANA RAO (on behalf of Sri B. Bhima Rao) : Will the Hon. the Minister for Food be pleased to state—

(*a*) the quantity of groundnut oil produced in each district of this Province during each of the three years prior to 31st March 1947;

(*b*) the quantity required for internal consumption in the Province annually;

(*c*) the quantity that could be exported outside the Province;

(*d*) the quantity permitted to be exported outside the Province during each of the three years prior to 31st March 1947;

(*e*) the persons who were granted permits to export to other Provinces quantities in excess of ten tons during the above period, their occupation and address and quantities for which the permits were issued; and

(*f*) whether any price was fixed for purchase and export and if so, the prices so fixed?

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" (*a*) Approximately 272,000 tons during the period November 1944—October 1945.

Approximately 265,000 tons during November 1945—October 1946.

Approximately 269,000 tons during November 1946—October 1947 (estimated).

This represents estimated production in the province. District-war figures are not available.

" (*b*) About 153,000 tons per annum.